OCTOBER 2016

Mark that shiny new 2017 calendar!
Plan to join Historical Society members and friends for a special evening to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the landmark Douglas Old School House!
~September 23, 2017~

Michigan's newest State Historical Marker dedicated in Douglas

Michigan Historical Commissioner Tom Truscott (far right) with SDHS members/Surfboat restorers (L-R) Dean Batchelor, Al Lyon and Dick Lyons at the dedication.
(click all for full size)

Members and friends joined SDHS leadership and the Michigan Historical Commission at the dedication of a new State of Michigan Historical Marker.

SDHS Bylaws revision approved

You will soon be receiving in the mail a ballot to vote on amended Bylaws of the Society. The Bylaws have not been amended in over 20 years, and need to be brought in line with changes in state law and best practices for non-profits. They were drafted by a licensed attorney on our Board and approved by the full Board. One of the changes is to authorize us to conduct such votes by electronic means in the future!

Once you receive it, please return your ballot at the earliest convenience. If you have a question, please contact executive director Nathan Nietering at info@sdhistoricalsociety.org.

Also, changes to Michigan law have required the SDHS to update its Articles of Incorporation (last revised in 1998). The Restated Articles must be approved by the voting membership in attendance at the annual meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 9 at the Old School House. This brief meeting will begin promptly at 7pm and be followed immediately by the November “monthly meeting”
Marker on October 15. The new marker details the history of the Francis Metallic Surfboat, the restored centerpiece of the shipwreck exhibit on the grounds of the Old School House.

The Michigan Historical Marker Program was established by the legislature and governor in 1955, years before other states followed suit. Since then, more than 1,700 markers have been placed, making Michigan's one of the premier marker programs in the nation. One of those markers came to the Douglas Union School -- today's Old School House History Center -- in 1998.

The green and gold markers are easy to locate and offer well-documented, easy-to-understand histories of people, places and events in Michigan's past. They show the importance a community places on its heritage and serve as signposts of historical significance. A marker dedication ceremony introduces a lasting resource and destination for tourism, education and community.

Attaining a state historical marker is no small feat. Applicants must make their case through their application and the documentation they acquire through historical research that the historic resource or topic is worthy of a Michigan Historical Marker. Applicants must also raise funds to pay for their marker and are responsible for the installation.

The Society thanks the Allegan County Community Foundation (ACCF) and member R.J. Peterson for their assistance in funding this marker. SDHS was the recipient of a Legacy Grant in late 2015 from the ACCF for the creation of two new historical markers in the Saugatuck-Douglas area. The Surfboat marker becomes the 15th in the Saugatuck-Douglas area and the 30th in Allegan County, on the heels of the Saugatuck Pump House marker which was dedicated on the S-D History Museum grounds in September.

The Restated Articles will be available for inspection in the Society office during regular business hours.

Volunteer Thank You Dinner Invitation

The SDHS Board of Directors cordially invites all active Society volunteers to the annual Volunteer Thank You Dinner. Various warm-you-up chilis, side dishes, and beverages will be provided by the Board. If you hosted at the Museum or Old School House, served on a committee or helped with a project, this is an invitation to you! Please join us at the Old School House on Sunday, October 30, starting at 6pm.

Mark Your Calendar:
Autumn Gatherings

MONTHLY MEETINGS

All upcoming Monthly Meeting presentations begin at 7:00PM at the Old School House at 130 Center Street in downtown Douglas.
Application for the Surfboat marker stemmed from the boat's listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015, spearheaded by SDHS volunteer Richard Donovan. The new marker is wall-mounted on the end of the boathouse building facing Center Street, beside a large window looking into the exhibit. There, it tells the story of the boat's significance year 'round, even during the off-season months when the boathouse itself is closed.

The marker was dedicated by District 80 State Representative Mary Whiteford and Michigan Historical Commissioner Tom Truscott. Also speaking and recognized was SDHS member Dick Lyons accompanied by Al Lyon and Dean Batchelor who along with others led the restoration of the surfboat several years ago, bringing it back from a highly deteriorated state to the polished and restored artifact we have today. About 30 members and friends attended the ceremony on a breezy fall morning.

SDHS has been chronicling local area historical markers on our Facebook page since the beginning of 2016. Markers can be found at both Saugatuck and Douglas city halls, several area churches, and other sites of important historic significance.

Nathan's side note: I was asked recently where the markers are made. The Michigan markers all come from Sewah Studios in Marietta, Ohio - down along the Ohio River. It is the preeminent producer of markers of this type in the country and most states and historic districts (including the city of Holland) have their markers made here. Each marker is individually made of cast aluminum. You can learn

November 9: Chain Ferry Interpretations, and other new art on exhibit at the Old School House, presented by art curator Ken Kutzel

Still looking for a Sponsor!
Contact Nathan if you'd like more information

December 15: Annual SDHS Holiday Party, this year at the Saugatuck Yacht Club, 6:00-9:00PM

Thank you, thank you to the generous SDHS members and friends who hosted a Dine Around event in 2016! We're already working on scheduling a great series of Dine Around events for 2017 - see you then!

Thank you Dine Around hosts:
- Chuck Arida & Christopher Lehman
- Susie Blair
- Ken Carls
- Dave & Liz Engel
- Janice & Tom Krakowski
- Mark Neidlinger & Steve Merouse
- Mark Randall & Chris Saldivar
- John Regas
- Jim Schmiechen
- Tracey Shafroth
- Renee Zita
more about the process of making a marker [HERE].

![Image of a marker]

*Thanks to Steve Hutchins, John Migas and Nathan Nietering for installing the marker a few days early!*

---

**Welcome New Members!**

We would like to welcome the following members who have joined the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society since the last newsletter!

- Tracey DellaVecchia - Douglas, MI
- David and Beverly Sheridan - Dayton, OH
- Gerald and Cynthia Stahl - Grand Rapids, MI

---

**Janet Wolbrink, 93**

Janet Wolbrink, Charter member of the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society and longtime Life member, passed away on September 22. Click [HERE] for more details.

---

**Doug Turner, 83**

Doug Turner, longtime member of the Society passed away on October 5. Click [HERE] for more details.

---

**Don't forget to Vote!**

This Saugatuck ballot box lives on at the Museum.

Election day is right around the corner! If you visited the History Museum this summer you may have seen a large steel cylinder serving as our donation jar. It's an artifact from our collection serving an alternate re-use. It is actually a WWII-era ballot box from Saugatuck Village. From the SDHS collection, we found this photograph dated 1946 with the caption: *Township Treasurer James Brown assists a voter.* Ballots and ballot receptacles may look a little different today but the process is still a vital part of our democracy.

(Click image for full-size)
By Peg Sanford

In her 1934 will, Woman's Club member Minnie left the Breuckman family home, the land behind her home, and money to women of the club in order to provide a club home. Peg Sanford, after researching the family in the SDHS records, told the group assembled about the life of the Breuckman family and the individuals buried in the plot. William, the youngest son, died in a freak accident at Mr. Ebmyer's shingle mill at the age of 11. Mother Breuckman lived the longest and died in her home at the age of 88 in 1914. Thank you to the SDHS and to Chris Yoder who has worked tirelessly to connect our history through cemetery records. Over the years, women from the SWC have gone to Riverside cemetery to celebrate the Breuckman family and decorate the family graves. This year they took fall mums. (Pictured left to right: Sylvia Daple, Tanya Sheridan, Donna St Andre, Gail Henneberry, Patti Birkes, Gladys Aldrich, Peg Sanford).

---

Garden Happenings

"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."
~Winnie-the-Pooh

The autumn season is so spectacular that it is very difficult to say goodbye to our floral gardens. Please take time to enjoy them in all their fall glory. Fall maintenance is going on around the Museum and the

---

You can help document an important era for the Saugatuck-Douglas Museum (and archives)

Did you visit or live in the Saugatuck area anytime in the 1950s-1970s? Help the exhibit team use your Saugatuck recollections for a new exhibit entitled "Cold War: Hot Towns - the Saugatuck Area in the 1950s-1960s-1970s" - to open May 27, 2017!

We are looking for your "back-stories" on what life was like in the Saugatuck area in the 1950s-1970s. Fears of (or preparation for) a nuclear attack?, the counter-culture "hippie" and peace movements, beach boating, water skiing, and cottage life? Food, jazz and rock concerts, motorcycles and cars, bars, youth liberation and generational divide, LGBT "gay" life, big "street drinking" weekends?

The exhibit will trace how the area collectively called "Saugatuck" was a very interesting microcosm of "Cold War" America in upheaval and change. We need your stories and photographs/slides!

If so, send to historian Jim Schmiechen at James.Schmiechen@gmail.com or by postal mail to PO Box 691 Douglas, MI 49406. Rather respond through conversation? Call me: 269-414-9199

---

We'd love to see a line like this of folks wanting to share their photos and stories of the Cold War Era! (These are actually thirsty beach-goers at the Oval in line for a drink post WWII, SDHS Collection, click for full size)
Old School House, as well as a few special projects we would like to finish. One project is to add more bulbs to our spring Daffodil Trail. We are selling packets of 15 bulbs for $30.00 with the proceeds going back into our garden. All you have to do is buy them.....we will do the rest! If you are interested, please stop by the OSH and drop a check off to Nathan.

Another project is to seal the reinstalled Camp Gray sign. Thanks to John Manchester, we have a plan to make sure our wooden sign will stay with us for a very long time. John was also instrumental in saving the sign in the first place and we are very appreciative. Another thank you goes out to Sally Winthers, she designed and applied the cursive ABC's on the slate boards. They look so cool with the lettering on it. Thank you to our garden gnomes who planted the perennials that Mike Economos brought down from the museum, what a fun surprise! One last thank you goes out to all that helped with our state historical markers. They look right at home among the gardens.

Next month we will start our plans for Root Camp 2017. We would like to focus on our local Native Americans and already have had calls about possible projects and speakers. We would like to have music for the kids this upcoming camp, so if anyone can help us find a contact for a Native American drummer, we would really appreciate it.

See everyone at the volunteer party on October 30th. Until next month,

-The Garden and Root Camp Committees

Bid a fond farewell to WATER as Museum closes for the season

This time comes around every year - the last weekend the museum is open for the season. This year is the second of the WATER exhibit, which means that after two successful summers, it will soon be history as well. A new exhibition will be unveiled in the museum in May, 2017.

The History Museum is open 12noon-4pm this Saturday and Sunday October 29-30. Admission is free. The Museum Shop features interesting and memorable history and local-interest gifts for yourselves or others and is open the same hours.

These two boys had a blast playing the catch-and-release fishing game, one of several second-year enhancements added to WATER for 2016. They stopped and checked what type of fish they were, then put them back and fished from smallest to largest. (click both view full size)
Did you know that researching your family history is one of the ways people experience their most personal connection to the past? Who are my ancestors? Where did they come from? What did they do?

The SDHS Family History Group can help you in your quest, whether you are new to family history research or just want to learn more about sources and records. Got questions on how to get going? That is what we are for! Call or email us or take note of these upcoming regular meetings of the SDHS Family History Group:

**Thursday October 27**
**Thursday November 3**
**Thursday November 17**

These upcoming meetings are in the Old School House in the downstairs tech room, and begin at 3:30pm. Note that your family history does not have to have any connection to the Saugatuck-Douglas area! If you can't attend a meeting, we can still provide assistance! The only requirement to participate is a membership in the SDHS.

Questions/comments/advice/needs - contact
Jack Sheridan:
269 857-7144
jack.sheridan@gmail.com
Chris Yoder:
269 857-4327
cyoder@tds.net

---

**The Bill Simmons Scrapbook**
By Jack Sheridan

This month begins the second year of the *History by Camera* feature - the BILL SIMMONS SCRAPBOOK. The format the next six months will change to fewer photos and more historical commentary and analysis. This column will be one of the tools used to promote the upcoming 2017 Museum exhibit "Cold War: Hot Towns."

Bill was a semi-professional photographer, originally from Chicago, who moved to Saugatuck about 1940. He had a couple of stints as the editor of the *Commercial Record*. Over the next twenty two years he took numerous black and white photos.

He died in 1962 and these photos went unnoticed until 1998 when some 3,000 negatives were given to the SDHS. What a wonderful record of the middle of the twentieth century!

The photos this month highlight the Alewife mess of the late 1950s and 1960s. The text is from an article in the May 12, 1961 *Commercial Record* and the photos are by Bill Simmons, of course.

Alewives are an alien species to the Great Lakes that migrated in via the Saint Lawrence Seaway. There were few natural predators to feed on them - Lake Trout had been decimated by the Lamprey at that time - and the Alewife population took off.

Did the fish have commercial value? An important question of interest to commercial fishermen, like
The holiday season is less than two months away! Consider an easy-to-wrap gift for the history lover in your life by purchasing one of the Society's many wonderful publications. Or, send a copy of the WGVU/SDHS DVD *Michigan Hometown Stories: Saugatuck-Douglas* to someone you know who is missing S-D! Simply order online through our website and they will be mailed directly to you (or a gift recipient) by Priority Mail. Shipping costs are included in your online purchase price! All proceeds benefit the Society.


---

**Peeling back layers of history**

Sally Winthers reveals new "old" cursive lettering atop the recently relocated Old School House slate boards in the Back-in-Time Garden. When the new condo building went up behind the School House property, the view from the Mt. Baldhead viewing platform was a bit....obstructed. A rethink of this part of the garden moved the slate boards from the Children's Garden area near the orchard up to the former platform. To complete the look, and to better tie in the slates' original purpose and current exhibit the Peel family. Maybe suitable for cat food or...? And a big problem for the fisherman was the handling of large quantities of little fishes. The government got involved.

The Alewife, being a salt water species, was not completely adapted to the fresh water environment. Under certain water temperature conditions, massive die-offs occurred. Our beautiful beaches were covered with unpleasant results!

As we now know, the Alewife problem brought on a solution with the importation of salmon to gobble up the little buggers, and a fantastic Great Lakes sport fishing industry was born!

Click on the image above to see the high-definition images and newspaper article text!

I appreciate your feedback on my captions, and the selection of these images. Please point out my good choices and my goofs by sending an email to jack.sheridan@gmail.com. I'd love to hear some feedback on my choices - how about some discussion? **Subject suggestions encouraged!**

Any reader comments will not be published without reader permission.

Last month featured a photo of the middle block of downtown Butler Street ca. 1947. As a result, a
on the 150-year history of the Old School House, the weatherproof cursive lettering was added.

Chalk is provided on the sill of the platform so you too can practice your cursive skills! The boards, along with the recently installed Camp Gray sign at the entrance, have really improved the look of this corner of the garden, and have tremendously increased its historical value. Thanks to all who made these projects possible!

Lively email discussion between myself, Kirke White and Howard Schultz ensued, primarily on the location of barbers and their shops. Thanks fellas. But we still do not know the name of the restaurant next to Funks Newsstand. Part of the sign is visible: _THER_ _ Dinners - Sandwiches. Hmmm. Anybody?

You make a BIG difference!

Funks Newsstand (north of Pumpemickels building) is next to the mystery restaurant

(Click for full size)

**ABOUT THE SOCIETY**

Members are the lifeblood of the Society. To join as a member, select from the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premium</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifetime</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior (65+)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Household</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Send check payable to the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society to: PO Box 617, Douglas, Michigan 49406. Click [HERE](#) for a Society Membership Application.

**Send in your dues payment today or click [HERE](#) to renew online.**

Send items for the newsletter to: Nathan Nietering, PO Box 617, Douglas, MI 49406 or email [info@sdhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@sdhistoricalsociety.org)
SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY FACILITIES

The Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum is located at 735 Park Street in Saugatuck, in the historic Saugatuck Pump House building. The History Museum and WATER, our feature exhibit, is open Saturdays and Sundays through the end of October. Always free to the public but donations gratefully accepted.

Click HERE to learn more about the Museum and recent past exhibits.

The Old School House History Center and Francis Surfboat Exhibit is located at 130 Center Street in Douglas. For group tours of the School House, please contact Nathan Nietering at 269-857-5751 or by email at director@sdhistoricalsociety.org. The Surfboat Exhibit and Back-in-Time Garden are open to the public daily throughout the autumn. The Old School House exhibits are open Thursday-Saturday, 11am-3pm through October 29. Admission is free to the public but donations gratefully accepted.

The Society's Technology Center is located in the lower level of the Old School House History Center at 130 Center Street in downtown Douglas. Open by appointment.

The Society's Archives office is located in the lower level of the Old School House and is open for research on Monday afternoons 1-4pm. Use the back stairway for easy access. E-mail the archives directly: archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org

Society Main Phone: 269-857-5751
Museum Phone: 269-857-7900
Tech Center/Archives Phone: 269-857-7901
www.sdhistoricalsociety.org

Follow us and learn more history on Facebook! Click the logo below.

Again this year, the Society's Newsletter is being underwritten by a generous donation from the late Life Member, Frances Vorys.